



State of Utah

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NEWS RELEASE

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Input sought on Selenium Standard for Great Salt Lake

Salt Lake City, Utah – After a four-year effort, the Great Salt Lake Selenium Steering Committee will present a summary of the work on a selenium standard for the Great Salt Lake at 7 p.m. Tuesday, May 20 in Room 101 at the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), 168 N. 1950 West. The meeting will begin at 6 p.m. with an open house.

The Steering Committee comprised of industry, government, and environmental groups, began work in 2004 on developing a site-specific numeric water quality standard for selenium for the open water of the Great Salt Lake. A proposal to discharge selenium into the Jordan River as part of a groundwater cleanup project prompted DEQ to initiate the process of establishing a selenium threshold that would protect the lake's unique ecology while providing industry and others the continued economic benefit of the lake. Selenium is a naturally occurring mineral that in large doses can be toxic to wildlife.

"This is truly a groundbreaking project," said Walt Baker, director of the Division of Water Quality. "This will be the first numeric water quality standard for the Great Salt Lake and if adopted, the first tissue-based water quality standard in Utah."

Throughout the process, the Steering Committee relied heavily on a Science Panel and its contractors that included world experts in environmental regulation, toxicity, bioaccumulation, environmental chemistry and avian biology. The engineering firm of CH2M Hill was hired to manage the \$2.3 million project.

Following the May 20th meeting, the Great Salt Lake Selenium Steering Committee will review comments and develop a formal recommendation to the Water Quality Board for a numeric selenium standard that is protective of the designated beneficial uses of the Great Salt Lake. More information can be found on the Web: http://www.deq.utah.gov/Issues/GSL_WQSC/index.htm

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